

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1553

EXDIS

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TAGS: PDIP PBOR EAID OVIP TH CB TH LA
SUBJECT: THAI RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINA: THAI-CAMBODIAN TALKS
IN OFFING

REF: BANGKOK 987

SUMMARY: IN ANOTHER MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY BREAKTHROUGH, THAI
FONMIN UPPADIT WILL FLY TO PHNOM PENH JANUARY 30-FEB 2 FOR
TALKS WITH DEP. PM IENG SARY. DISCUSSIONS WILL PRESUMABLY
FOCUS ON NORMALIZATION AND THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER DIFFICULTIES.
SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL WILL ALSO VISIT VIENTIANE NEXT WEEK
TO DELIVER CEREMONIALLY GIFTS OF RICE
AND SALT. SENIOR
RTG OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO DESCRIBE, IN GLOWING TERMS, THE
RECENT VISIT TO BANGKOK OF SRV FONMIN NGUYEN DUY TRINH.
SND SUMMARY.

1. AT LUNCH JANUARY 16 FOR VISITING SENIOR STATE DEPT
OFFICIALS, UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE ARUN INFORMED US IN
STRICTEST CONFIDENCE THAT FONMIN UPPADIT WILL MEET
CAMBODIAN DEP. PM FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IENG SARY IN
PHNOM PENH JANUARY 30-FEB 2. ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE
MADE JANUARY 23 AND THAI DELEGATION WILL FLY TO
PHNOM PENH JANUARY 30. OUTSIDE OF OBJECTIVE OF
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NORMALIZATION, THAIS ARE UNCERTAIN OF THE AGENDA
BEYOND LIKELY DISCUSSION OF THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER
DIFFICULTIES.

2. AMBASSADOR ARUN SAID THAT THAIS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED
MEETING IN PATTAYA, THAILAND, BUT THEN ACQUIESCED TO
PHNOM PENH AS THE SITE. CAMBODIANS REQUESTED THAT

THE THAI DELEGATION NOT RPT NOT USE MILITARY AIRCRAFT FOR THE VISIT, TO WHICH THAIS AGREED AND WILL USE COMMERCIAL CHARTERED FLIGHT.

3. AT SAME LUNCH, DEPUTY FONMIN WONG TOLD DCM THAT HE WOULD VISIT LAOS NEXT WEEK FOR A CEREMONIAL PRESENTATION OF 1500 BAGS OF RICE (EST. 150 TONS) AND 2,000 BAGS OF SALT TO THE LAOTIANS. REGARDING THE ICAO TALKS ON CIVIL AVIATION SCHEDULED FOR MID-FEBRUARY IN VIENTIANE AMONG LAOS, THAILAND, THE SRV, AND HONG KONG, WONG EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED TO RE-OPEN THE AMBER ONE ROUTE.

4. REGARDING ITS THIRD INDOCHINE NEIGHBOR, AMBASSADOR ARUN DESCRIBED THE ATMOSPHERICS DURING THE SRV FONMIN TRINH'S JANUARY 9-12 VISIT AS "VERY INFORMAL AND VERY RELAXED." THAIS FOUND THE SRV DELEGATION VERY EASY TO DEAL WITH. VIETNAMESE WERE EXTREMELY WELL PREPARED. ACCORDING TO ARUN, THE VIETNAMESE HAD A COUPLE OF ADVANTAGES, BUT HE SUGGESTED THAT THAILAND HAD FARED WELL NEVERTHELESS. FOR EXAMPLE, HE NOTED THAT VIETNAMESE HAD BROUGHT A DRAFT COMMUNIQUE, BUT HAD AGREED TO ACCEPT THE THAI DRAFT AS THE BASIS OF NEGOTIATION. REGARDING THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE ISSUE, THAIS SOUGHT TO REITERATE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE AUGUST 6, 1976 COMMUNIQUE. IN THE ONLY INSTANCE IN WHICH THE SUBJECT WAS RAISED, VIETNAMESE PROPOSED, CONFIDENTIAL

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AS A QUID PRO QUO, THE REITERATION OF THE LANGUAGE FROM THE 1976 COMMUNIQUE ON RETURN OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT FROM THAILAND TO VIETNAM. BOTH SIDES THEN AGREED TO SIDESTEP THE REFUGEE AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT ISSUED IN THE COMMUNIQUE BY VAGUE REFERENCE TO "EFFORTS TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING BILATERAL QUESTIONS."

5. COMMENT: ANNOUNCEMENT AND VISIT TO PHNOM PENH WILL BE PERCEIVED HERE AS ANOTHER MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY BREAKTHROUGH FOR THE KRIANGSAK GOVERNMENT. FONMIN UPPADIT TOLD DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY THAT THE THAIS HAD DISCUSSED THEIR CAMBODIAN INITIATIVE WITH THE VIETNAMESE WHO HAD NOT REGISTERED ANY OBJECTION. UPPADIT INDICATED THAT THAIS ARE DELIGHTED OVER THE CAMBODIAN RESPONSE WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO CONTINUE THEIR POLICY OF BALANCED RELATIONS WITH EACH OF THE INDOCHINESE POWERS. WHITEHOUSE

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